

April-June 2004

Volume 4, Issue 2

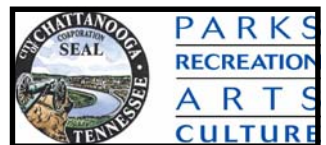
Speaking



Historic Lookout Mountain in the background on a gorgeous spring day at Champions Club

Champions Club: Spring Highlights

- ☺ Champions Spring Leagues begin (March 29)
- ☺ Champions High School Tournament (April 23-24)
- ☺ Hamilton Co. Middle School Tournament (May 6-7)
- ☺ Junior Novice Grand Prix I (May 14-16)



Oh, Yes! Springtime!

It's time to bid adieu to Old Man Winter.

Hello, Springtime! It's time to get back on the tennis courts.

With no indoor courts, the Champions Club kicks back into gear with the arrival of spring.

Local USA League play dominates the weekends, while the Champions Spring Leagues actually started

weeknight, round-robin play on March 29.

The season's first event is the popular 24-team Champions High School Tournament. Following are the Tennessee Senior Games, the Champions/Hamilton County Middle School Tournament and the Champions Junior Novice Grand Prix I.

Can summer be far behind?

Inside This Issue:

Junior Ranking System: Pro, Con?	2
Guidi, Cambron Players Of Month	3
2004 High School Event Upgraded	3
A Champions Tip From Eric Voges	4
Spring Leagues Set New Marks	4

New Junior Ranking System Good Or Bad? Time Will Tell!

Chattanooga's Bo Seal capped 2003 co-ranked as the nation's No. 1 tennis player in Boys 12s, but didn't have the credentials (points, to be specific) to enter a National Open 14s in February of 2004.

As a junior tennis player or parent of a junior player, you either like the USTA's newly-adopted point ranking system, or you don't. Or, as Bo's dad, Bob, put it, "I'll have to learn to live with it."

Points are awarded for success per round in events, and tournaments are based on Levels 1-5 (Level 1 being the highest) in national, sectional and state. Players must accumulate points in each to hold rankings, or point standings.

The Star system the USTA previously employed was based on direct wins, which, according to many, pushed high-ranked players into "ducking" tournaments, as to not pick up a defeat.

Eric Voges, the head tennis coach at McCallie School and Chairman of High Performance & Coaches Commission for the Southern Tennis Association, is an advocate for the new point system.

"(The new system) encourages play. It does not count losses; therefore, kids, parents and coaches can develop a schedule based on development. You do not get penalized for losses and you can easily find out where you stand," Voges said. "I think it's important for people to understand the freedom they now have with playing tournaments.

"Under the old system, there were some rankings that you could not explain," he added. "You could actually win a tournament and your ranking could move down. If you had a bad loss under the old system, even if you beat that guy five more times, it still would penalize you heavily for that one loss."

Thus, players would "duck" tournaments, afraid of damaging their rankings.

"My opinion is that you can't duck the competition forever," Seal said. "If you want to win one of the big tournaments, you have to play. At age 11, Bo could get in the tournaments on his ranking alone. Then he just fell off the radar screen. With the new system, you've got to play a ton."

Maybe too much, it's been suggested.

"The system is geared to the kids who can afford to travel (miss school) and play in more tournaments," Seal added. "Now you can't afford to miss the Easter Bowl or a STA Bullfrog, or your ranking

will slip. And we can't spend that much money chasing a higher ranking."

Sue Bartlett, whose daughter Claire continues to climb the national ranking list, explained that one big disadvantage is from the financial point of view.

"I think everyone is now forced to travel and play the big tournaments, which gets very expensive when you have to fly all over the country because three of the four Nationals are out West."

Sue, a native of England, noted that her homeland just switched back from the USTA's new system to something like the old one because it was thought the juniors were playing too much.

"A common fear," Voges said, "is that kids can buy points and it takes more money. You can only count a certain number of tournaments for your rankings. The number is different for national, sectional and state. Sure, it does make it difficult because if you don't play, someone else is and they may be acquiring points while you are not."

2004 USTA/STA Junior Player Point Charts					
Player Result	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Champion	660	330	220	110	22
2 nd Place	540	270	180	90	18
3 rd Place	480	240	160	80	16
4 th Place	420	210	140	70	14
Quarterfinalist	300	150	100	50	10
Reached Round Of 16	240	120	80	40	8
Reached Round Of 32	180	90	60	30	6
Reached Round Of 64	120	60	40	20	4
Reached Round Of 128	60	30	20	10	2
Reached Round Of 256	0	0	0	0	0
Points Per Round Earned For Each Consolation Round Won	30	15	10	5	1

As of April 2, Bo's 14s national ranking (points) was No. 289, while Orlando Lour-enco was No. 524 in 14s. Claire Bartlett ranked No. 482 in Girls 16s, but Chattanooga's highest ranked player was Stephanie Harris — No. 92 in Girls 18s. Orlando Lour-enco, Little O's dad and the Director of Tennis at the

Champions Club, explained, "As with all ranking systems there are advantages and disadvantages. I am hopeful that the USTA will refine the system as expediently as possible to rectify the obvious flaws."

It's been frequently mentioned that the new point system benefits the junior players who are wealthy, attend tennis academies or are home-schooled.

Time and money are essentials.

"The bottom line is that none of us like change and some of us didn't plan as well as we should have last year—myself included—so the new system is not suiting us as well as we would like it to at the moment," said Sue Bartlett. "When everyone gets used to the new system, it will be fine. It's not perfect—nothing is—but it is better than the one we had."

But, as Bob Seal stressed, "I believe the new system will be a hard sale to everybody."

Is the USTA's point system good or bad? Only time will tell!

GUIDI, CAMBRON JR. PLAYERS OF THE MONTH

Alex Guidi

Age/Birthday/Zodiac Sign: 9/
September 2/Virgo

School/Grade: St. Jude/4th

Favorite Subject: Math

Favorite Restaurant/Food: Papa John's/ham & pineapple pizza

Favorite Movie: Cat In The Hat

Favorite Type of Music/Favorite Music Artist: Hip-Hop/Clay Aiken

Hobbies Outside Of Tennis: Soccer

Who Introduced You To Tennis? (Aunt) Heather Rogers

Began Playing Tennis: At age 7

Favorite Shot: Forehand

Favorite Pro Players: Andre Agassi (male), Serena Williams (female)

Tennis Racquet You Use: Prince

Best Tennis Memory/Highlight: "It was when I kicked my mom's (Becky) butt."

Becky on (daughter) Alex: "Alex has been around the tennis court for around two years and went to a couple of tennis camps ... she loved it. Alex never gives up and has the heart of a lion for sports."



Alex Guidi

Kris Cambron

Age/Birthday/Zodiac Sign: 12/
September 29/Libra

School/Grade: St. Jude/7th

Favorite Subject: Math

Favorite Restaurant/Food: Subway/rice

Favorite Movie: Dickie Roberts: Former Child Star

Favorite Type of Music/Favorite Musical Artist: Anything & everything Outkast



Kris Cambron

Hobbies Outside Of Tennis: Soccer/theatre

Who Introduced You To Tennis? Matt (brother)

Began Playing Tennis: At age 8

Favorite Shot: Backhand

Favorite Pro Players: Andre Agassi (male) & Venus Williams (female)

Tennis Racquet You Use: Wilson Titanium

Best Tennis Memory/Highlight: "It was when I had a service ace against my mom (Cheryl)."

Cheryl on (daughter) Kris: "Kris enjoys playing a wide variety of sports. She didn't really enjoy tennis until she attended a tennis camp and received an award as the most improved player."

Quality & Quantity: Champions High School Tournament Upgrades

As the numbers increase, so do the talent levels and expectations as the Champions Club's 4th Annual High School Tournament nears.

Twenty-four teams (12 boys, 12 girls) will compete for team and individual championships in A and B Divisions on Friday, April 23, and Saturday, April 24.

The A Divisions will consist of eight teams each in the boys and girls playoffs, all six singles players and all three doubles teams guaranteed three matches.

The B Divisions will consist of four teams in each, utilizing the round-robin format—which also guarantees three matches. The tournament is scheduled less than 10 days before the TSSAA high school play-

offs are set to begin.

In the 2003 competition, Ooltewah held off Rhea County for the Boys A title and Murfreesboro Blackman topped Nashville David Lipscomb in Girls A. In the B Divisions, Bradley Central was dominant among the boys and McMinn County slipped past the Ooltewah girls.

The 2004 field consists of boys and girls teams from Rhea County, Bradley Central, Ooltewah, Cleveland, McMinn County, Red Bank, Soddy-Daisy, University School-Nashville, Murfreesboro Oakland, Murfreesboro Siegel, and St. Andrews-Sewanee, as well as the Hixson boys and Blackman girls.

The Champions Club, its staff and the 24 participating teams in the High School Tournament wish to thank the Chattanooga Tennis Patrons for its support!

Champions Club

Address:

P.O. Box 6
Lupton City, TN 37351-0006

Phone:

(423) 870-3112

Fax:

(423) 870-4224

Email:

baker_eddie@mail.chattanooga.gov

**Discover the Champion in
yourself!**

We're on the web:

www.chattanooga.gov/cpr/
(go to Champions Club)

Leagues, Anyone?

Leagues, anyone?

Actually, the Champions Club's 2004 Spring Leagues, which began March 29, are doing quite well, thank you.

The 127 participants break the mark of players in a league session. The previous record was 115 playing in the 2003 Fall Leagues.

The larger divisions in the spring session are Men's 4.0 singles (14) Men's 3.0 and Women's 3.0 singles (12 participants in each), and Men's 3.5 and 4.5 singles (11 in each).

The Champions Summer Leagues are tentatively scheduled to begin May 31.

A Champions Tip ...

From Eric Voges

- Varsity Tennis Coach McCallie School
- Chair of High Performance & Coaches Commission for Southern Tennis Association

When developing your tennis game, you want to learn all the different grips and strokes. I compare it to a carpenter building a house. If a carpenter had just one tool, say a hammer, he would not be able to build much. But if he had a hammer, saw, and screwdriver, then he would be able to build to do a lot more when building. As a player, if all you can do is hit ground strokes, then the only answer you have is to hit more ground strokes. If, on the other hand, you knew how to hit drop shots, volleys, approach shots, lobs, and overheads, then you as the player would have a lot more to work with when competing.

Learning how to switch your grips is important. For a slice, a volley, and a real wide shot, you will need to switch your grip toward a continental grip. This grip is difficult at young ages because it requires strength, but it should still be learned and practiced. It is much easier to master that shot at 14 if you have already used the grip at 8-10 years of age. Another instance when you will switch your grip is when you are stretched out wide at net or on the baseline. If I am stretched out wide to my forehand, I will actually switch to a backhand grip, then reach out to hit the ball. That grip opens my racket face and enables the ball to go up and over the net. If stretched to my backhand side, I will switch my grip to a forehand grip and then reach out and will be able to lift that ball over the net.

Approaching the net requires transition from the baseline to the net. I think the volleys will start being seen a lot more on the pro tour because ground strokes are so good, that the only way some people will win is by coming into the net. Coming to net enables you to end a point. In junior tournaments I see players with

great ground strokes, and they seldom take advantage of those ground strokes because they are unable to take a short ball and approach the net to end the point with a volley. So the good baseline player cannot put any pressure on his opponent and his opponent knows it and becomes very comfortable at the baseline knowing his opponent will not come in and apply pressure.

So don't be afraid to work on different shots and grips while you are practicing. They will give you more tools to work with and to win with. Good luck with your tennis!



Eric Voges: On the court at McCallie